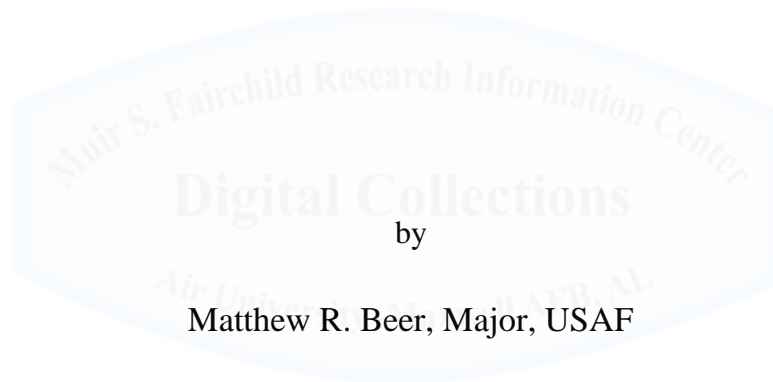


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BLACK JACK PERSHING: PARTNERSHIPS IN WARFARE



by

Matthew R. Beer, Major, USAF

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Advisor: Dr Michael Allsep

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Abstract

During his storied military career, General John J. Pershing partnered with a wide variety of characters. From the American West to the fields of Europe, Pershing developed his own sense of cultural awareness. This cultural intelligence would directly impact his ability to establish trust with his partners, be they Sioux army scouts, Cuban *insurrectos*, Moro tribesman or European army commanders. Current U.S. strategy emphasizes the need for military partnerships. Briefly defining partnerships and then reviewing Pershing's personal experiences in turn will highlight the importance of cultural intelligence for Pershing's partnering and provide insight for America's military as it seeks to share the burdens of future conflict.



INTRODUCTION

The middle-aged army captain squatted on his heels chewing betel nut with Sajiduciman, an old priest and Moro tribal headman. After a brief ceremony the old priest rose, embraced the American and proclaimed him an honorary *datto*, or chief. Attendants produced a rare copy of the Koran, over which both the officer and the chief pledged their loyalty to the United States. The year was 1903 and the newly anointed *datto* was Captain John J. Pershing.¹ Pershing's career spanned a fascinating period in American military history, from the Indian Wars of the American West to the trench warfare of the First World War. Through this broad range of conflict Pershing found himself in partnership with a myriad of characters. Sioux army scouts, Cuban rebels, Moro tribesman, hostile Mexican armies and the most famous generals of World War I were among his allies. In each of these unique situations, Pershing used cultural awareness to pursue the trust that is so vital to successful military partnerships. Considering how Pershing used his own brand of cultural intelligence and how it influenced his many military partnerships may point the way for America's military as it seeks to share the burdens of future conflict. In order to learn from Pershing's colorful experiences in partnership warfare, we must first begin by reviewing them in turn.

SIOUX SCOUTS

Pershing's first experience partnering was brief but powerful. In March of 1891, after five years as a cavalry officer in New Mexico and the Dakotas, Lt. Pershing arrived at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to take command of a company of Sioux scouts.² One of four such companies, Pershing's scouts enlisted for six months at regular cavalry pay and were charged

with keeping the lid on gun running, inter-tribal conspiracies and acting as intermediaries between the U.S. government and their fellow Sioux.³ “This was my first experience commanding men of other than my own race and color,” Pershing later recalled, and while he was committed to impressing discipline and loyalty among his Sioux troopers, he also earnestly sought to win their confidence and learn about their customs.⁴ He recognized, for example, the importance of tribal rank and wisely appointed Sioux with high tribal standings as his no-coms. Thunder Bull, a cousin of the famous war chief Red Cloud, was his first selection.⁵

Pershing’s perceptiveness soon paid off. Surrounded by a hostile population and displaying an unspoken loyalty, Thunder Bull and the other non-coms appointed themselves Pershing’s bodyguards, sitting outside his tent at all hours and following him as he travelled



Lt. Pershing and Troop B Ogallala Indian Scouts, Pine Ridge Reservation.

about.⁶ “Every time I moved” Pershing later recalled of Thunder Bull, “that old Indian was on my trail.”⁷ When Sioux commissioners visited the reservation that summer, they too moved about with ease and noted the skill of the native scouts.⁸ The US government disbanded the Sioux scouts later that year, and

though their service was short lived Pershing’s fondness for them was not. As one of Pershing’s biographers would later write, “He succeeded with them...by treating them with respect and consideration. He did not tolerate them; he liked them.”⁹

INSURECCTOS

Not all of America's war partners earned Pershing's praise. June 14, 1898 found him sailing slowly toward Cuba aboard the *Leona* as quartermaster for the 10th Cavalry.¹⁰ As his troopers slogged ashore, Pershing and the *Leona* headed west, to the small village of Aserraderos.¹¹ There he was to pick up some 3,000 Cuban *insurrectos* under the command of General Calixto Garcia and transport them to Daiquiri-Siboney as reinforcements for the impending assault. Pershing found Garcia's men "a rag-tag, bob-tailed, poorly armed, and hungry lot, in appearance anything but an effective fighting force."¹² As the *Leona* made her way to Daiquiri-Siboney, Pershing noted in his diary that, "In my opinion they will prove of little service to the Americans."¹³

July 1 dawned under a cloudless sky and Pershing and a small group of military attaches and war correspondents strained their eyes toward the Spanish lines on San Juan Hill. At 08:20, artillery fire split the balmy Cuban air in a duel that lasted some forty-five minutes. A crowd of *insurrectos* near Pershing cheered each time the Americans fired, but quickly disappeared as an errant shell landed nearby destroying a Hotchkiss gun, wounding two Americans and demolishing a sugar mill.¹⁴ The quartermaster's disdain for the foreign fighters only grew when blanket rolls and haversacks which were left unguarded during the fighting disappeared into Cuban hands. As Pershing reflected long after his time in Cuba, "We got little or no help during that campaign from...any band of Cuban *insurrectos*."¹⁵

MORO TRIBESMAN

On Thanksgiving Day, 1899, Captain Pershing cruised into Manila Bay aboard the USS *Missouri* enroute to his new assignment in Zamboanga, on the western tip of Mindanao Island.¹⁶ As Adjutant General of the Department of Mindanao-Jolo, Philippines, he would spend the next two years mixing with Zamboanga's diverse population, studying the Moro language and culture and developing a deep understanding of the region. Shortly after his arrival, the energetic captain proposed partnering with Moro tribesman and Filipinos. "Now these fellows [Moros] would make splendid irregular troops," he argued, "and could be used against one another as we used the Indians in our own country...I believe Moros or Filipinos from other parts of the island could be enlisted... If it is to take 60,000 men or 100,000 to hold [these islands] in subjugation why we are up against the real thing, and people will soon get sick of it...In case of necessity Moro could be pitted against Filipinos and vice versa, as they are born enemy's [sic]."¹⁷ A change in leadership that summer meant Pershing's ideas would have to wait.

"Pershing, as you are the only man left here who knows anything about the Moros, I'm going to send you to Iligan," declared his new boss, Brig. Gen. George W. Davis, "Do everything possible to get in touch with the Moros of central Mindanao and makes friends of them."¹⁸ The Moros were a tribal people whose passions lay in making war and preserving their independence and unique brand of the Muslim faith. Despite the constant threat of uprisings and krisse-wielding *Juramentadas*, Pershing pursued a policy of security, prosperity and cultural tolerance. His regular visits to Iligan's market and inquiries into local crops and livestock appealed to Moro economic aspirations. "I may say," read his official report, "that I was very favorably impressed with these people and am of the opinion that much can be done with them by appealing to their reason and to their desire for riches."¹⁹ The blond-haired captain also worked through tribal leaders to reassure the people that the Americans were there to stay and

would not to interfere with religion. Pershing also steered clear of sensitive topics such as slavery and polygamy. Finally, he moved about unescorted to show his trust in tribal leaders and their ability to provide for local security. Perhaps the key to Pershing's effectiveness was his unprecedented level of commitment. According to fellow officer Robert L. Bullard, Pershing was "almost the only one of the officers" at Iligan who became interested in the Moros, "and by associating with them and studying them won their confidence and admiration. He became, in fact, very influential with them locally."²⁰

By May of 1902, Pershing assumed control of all Moro affairs, in large part due to his success in winning over Moro villages without resorting to violence. New orders from Davis



Moro Constabulary ca 1907

charged him to respond to the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Lake Lanao area by assuming command of the garrison at Camp Vicars and to "do what I could to pacify the Moros there."²¹ Hostile countryside surrounded Camp Vicars and with violence on the rise, security was top priority. Pershing's policy was to uphold the authority of local sultans on their own *Rancherias*, as well as holding them responsible for violence committed by their people.²² After reducing a hostile Moro fort at Bacolod, Pershing embarked on an impressive show of force by

marching his troops around Lake Lanao. The journey found Pershing at the head of his column or conferring with tribal leaders and won the captain numerous allies and a special place in the minds of many a Moro.

Pershing also made a point of buying goods and services from the Moros and reassuring them of American commitment. In an oft repeated ceremony, Pershing would present an American flag to his Moro guest to symbolize a long term partnership.²³ Time and again he reassured his visitors, "I will remain here a long time."²⁴ America's commitment had somehow become Pershing's own. "Pershing's interest in the Moros amounts to a mania," wrote Guy H. Preston in 1903. Pershing conferred hour upon hour with local leaders, ending each meeting with a small gift.²⁵ He used Moro warriors as his secret service. He even became an honorary *datto* and godfather to more than one Moro child. Ultimately, as one of Pershing's contemporaries would write, Pershing's "success is not the result of chance. It's due to his own personality and nearly four years of study and labor on the Moro question."²⁶

Pershing continued his labors with the Moros upon his return to Mindanao in 1909. As Governor General of the Moro Province, the graying officer would control 30,000 square miles of territory populated by Christian Filipinos, Chinese merchants, US pioneers, Japanese traders and hostile Moro tribesman.²⁷ Unlike previous assignments, Pershing would make use of Philippine Scouts. Formed of Filipino soldiers and lead by American officers, these units operated in remote areas untouched by American presence. Pershing hoped their "civilizing influence" would be just as important as their military abilities.²⁸ It wouldn't take long for General Pershing to see if the partnering ideas he had forwarded as a captain held water.

On November 28, Pershing sent a mixed force of the Philippine constabulary and local police to investigate the increasingly lawless region of Dapitan. The Moro insurgents slaughtered all save eight who escaped to tell the tale. Pershing quickly dispatched an officer who saw eye-to-eye with his proclivity for limited use of force, Major John P. Finley. Finley commanded a constabulary unit and the Second Company of Philippine scouts, a veteran force

that had proved itself a “splendid native auxiliary.”²⁹ Over the course of fourteen operations, Finley captured the insurgent leaders killing only thirty natives without the loss of a single scout or policeman.³⁰ On another occasion, Pershing employed two companies of Philippine Scouts along with regular forces to round up a group of Manobo tribesman that had killed nine American plantation owners. The operations, he recalled later, were “vigorously carried out.”³¹

Despite these successes, sporadic bloodshed on Jolo Island continued. In Sept of 1911, Pershing was forced to admit that violence “seemed to be a sort of second nature with many” [Moros], and he determined upon a policy of disarmament.³² Centuries of warrior culture could not be challenged without a fight, and the Governor General created a formidable force under the command of Col Frank West to carry out the task. The Jolo Field Forces were comprised of the 29th, 39th and 34th Companies, 2nd Battalion Philippine Scouts under Maj E.G. Peyton and the 45th, 46th and 52nd Companies Philippine Scouts as well as two constabulary companies led by Maj George A. Helfert.³³ By December 14, despite steady progress and tedious negotiation, several hundred Moros had fortified themselves in the burned out crater of Bud Dajo. Pershing hastened to Mount Dajo and took command, surrounding the base of the mountain with his Philippine scouts and determined to wait the insurgents out. Though some brief fighting occurred, the affair ended quietly by the end of the year, due in large part to the skill of the Philippine Scouts in sniffing out and sealing off a myriad of pathways and trails that led up to the Moro stronghold.

Continuing resistance on Jolo led to Pershing’s final and most violent campaign: the reduction of Bud Bagsak and its surrounding *cottas*. On June 9, 1913, he began a campaign requiring deception, coordinated maneuver and a fearlessness that he had come to rely on from his Philippine Scouts. The 51st Moros, in particular, made a name for themselves, scaling

difficult terrain under enemy fire and climbing hand over hand up the walls of Fort Matankup during the opening battle.³⁴ On the morning of June 15, the 51st Moros watched a US howitzer lob shells into the fog-shrouded heights of Mount Bagsak. Formidable defenses lined the only approach to the fort and Pershing originally ordered his white officers to remain out of harm's way. As the 51st moved past the first line of trenches they came under withering fire, their advance slowed and Pershing acted decisively. Ordering his white officers to the front, he himself walked among the scouts, calming and encouraging them to be ready when the enemy decided to press his false advantage. "The effect was electric," recalled one officer, and when the Moros counter-attacked they were swiftly defeated.³⁵ Pershing, pistol in hand, made the final assault of the last enemy trench alongside his own Moro scouts.³⁶ His greatest success may not have been martial, however, but instead the deep loyalty he created between himself and the Moro people. Indeed, when General Douglas MacArthur came ashore on the Philippine island of Jolo, he was met by an old Moro sultan who informed him that in 1905 he had pledged his loyalty to Pershing as a young warrior and had remained loyal to the United States ever since.³⁷

CARRANCISTAS

Pershing's next test in wartime partnering came in the spring of 1916, in a new, no less delicate operation. On March 9, Mexican rebels under Pancho Villa had raided Columbus, Texas, killing eighteen Americans. In response, the US government ordered the army to organize a force under Pershing's command to "proceed promptly across the border in pursuit of the Mexican band which attacked the town of Columbus...These troops will be withdrawn to American territory as soon as the de facto government of Mexico is able to relieve them of this work."³⁸ The Carranza government of Mexico quickly signed an agreement to allow US forces

to cross the border in pursuit of bandits, but did not see the document as retroactive.³⁹ This interpretation would have critical consequences for Pershing's Punitive Expedition to Mexico.

Chihuahua was a roughly one hundred mile wide strip of roadless deserts and rugged mountains stretching some five hundred miles into the heart of Mexico.⁴⁰ The Carranza government refused to allow the Americans use of Mexican railroads and it soon became clear that, in addition to overcoming the terrain, the expedition would have to battle the hostility of the Mexican people as well. "If this campaign should eventually prove successful," Pershing wrote his superiors, "it will be without the real assistance of any natives this side of the line."⁴¹ The Americans planned to go in fast and lean, using the latest technologies of aircraft and automobiles for reconnaissance and logistics, and Pershing forbid his troopers from occupying villages and towns to minimize contact with the hostile population. Despite the setbacks, Pershing's press releases were initially upbeat and positive.

Villa proved elusive, always staying one step ahead of Pershing's hard riding cavalry columns. The deeper they moved into Mexico, the more hostile the locals and *Carrancistas* became. "We were met by nothing but misinformation and subtle maneuvers to lead us off on wrong trails" Pershing later reflected.⁴² In April, American forces hot on Villa's trail skirmished with government forces blocking their path at Parral, some 200 miles south of the border. Pershing had seen enough and told the



correspondents travelling with him to write whatever they saw fit. “Nothing should be kept from the public” he growled, “You can go the limit.”⁴³ As he pulled his troops back north towards their supplies, the frustrated general fired off a telegram to his superiors. “Lately sentiment has changed to hostile opposition,” he wired. The government had lost control to local warlords. “In fact anarchy reigns supreme in all sections through which we have operated.”⁴⁴

By May 4, 1916, the Carranza government was opening calling for the immediate withdrawal of US troops.⁴⁵ General Funston wrote Pershing, warning that war was now “inevitable” while Lt George Patton wrote home to his father, noting that “We can’t go to town because they shoot at us now and then.”⁴⁶ A cavalry patrol that ended up in a fierce firefight at Carrizal, forced Pershing to withdraw northward and wait seven more months before the expedition was officially recalled. He summarized his campaign in a carefully-worded letter that blamed the expedition’s failure on the Carrancista government. “Going back to the early days of the campaign you will recall that the Parral incident halted the expedition and under our instructions it was necessary to wait on diplomatic action between the two governments. I want to invite your attention to the fact that at that time we had four cavalry columns converging toward Parral...if we could have continued the pursuit, there is little doubt but that Villa would have been captured.”⁴⁷

EUROPEAN “ASSOCIATES”

In each of Pershing’s formative combat experiences, the US had played the role of senior partner. When he arrived in war torn France on June 13, 1917 the shoe was on the other foot. What impressed the American at first was the desperation of the French. Three years of suffering gave way to tear-filled, cathartic receptions for the Americans, and Pershing found

them “most touching and in a sense most pathetic.”⁴⁸ Pershing was also struck by the lack of coordination between the allied armies. A meeting with Petain convinced him that the allies would never win “until they secured unity of action under some form of coordinated control.”⁴⁹ In spite of these shortcomings the Americans would have to rely on both the British and the French for training, logistical support and virtually all of the war materiel required to build an army capable of offensive action.

Rank, allied decorations, strategy and tactics and unavoidable linguistic misunderstandings caused friction during the war, but amalgamation became *the* critical issue for Pershing and the Allies. As soon as America entered the war, the Allies saw the amalgamation of her fresh troops into their veteran armies as the surest path to victory. “If you ask me how your force could most quickly make itself felt in Europe,” one British attaché remarked, “I would say by sending 500,000 untrained men at once to our depots in England to be trained there and drafted into our armies in France.”⁵⁰ The British would also leverage American reliance on British shipping to pressure their junior ally throughout the war. Even the French saw Pershing’s staff as inadequate and his army woefully untrained. When a French general approached an American sentry and the soldier handed him his rifle and sat down to roll a cigarette, it merely confirmed French suspicions.⁵¹ Pershing, unsurprisingly, staunchly opposed any arrangement that subordinated the formation of an American army. He argued time and again that Americans would lose their national identity and that combat effectiveness would suffer. In addition, reclaiming American units from allied lines would create future disruptions. Finally, and perhaps most important to the AEF’s commander, American troops would be overexposed to allied training, which he viewed as “a positive detriment” in many cases.⁵² Pershing’s primary mission was to build an American army as quickly as possible. “We cannot permit our men to

serve under another flag,” he summarized, “except in an extreme emergency and then only temporarily.”⁵³

The extreme emergency was not long in coming. In March of 1918, the Germans launched a massive offensive that made some of the deepest advances since 1914. Pressure for amalgamation began to mount. “Pershing, with his tight-lipped smile, kept putting things off,” Clemenceau would recall, “while my country’s fate was every moment at stake on the battlefields, which had already drunk the best blood of France.”⁵⁴ Overruled by Washington, Pershing released all trained American divisions to the French to bolster the line in Champagne. Newer units freed up French reserves by moving into quiet sectors while five divisions stripped from the British hurried to join French commands.⁵⁵ With his impeccable sense of timing, Pershing insured Foch, Clemenceau and Petain that “all we have are yours; use them as you wish.”⁵⁶ Over the following months, American performance under French leadership, particularly during the offensive at Soissons, did much to demonstrate the doughboy’s fighting spirit and pave the way for the formation of an American army. As one *poilu* wrote, “The English are our allies, but the Americans are our friends.”⁵⁷

On 24 July, Pershing issued orders creating the American First Army and he planned to use it in a long anticipated offensive against the Saint-Mihiel salient. Foch and Haig had hatched quite a different plan, however, one that proposed attacking the shoulders of the entire German front. The new operation would render First Army’s offensive unnecessary. Foch visited AEF headquarters and dropped the bomb in person. As the debate between Pershing and Foch descended into insults the American briefly considered knocking out the French generalissimo. Instead, he confided to his diary his long held belief that the French and British were once again trying to undermine an independent American army. “Perhaps,” he wrote, “they did not wish

American to find out her strength.”⁵⁸ Pershing’s offensive went forward, with not one piece of American artillery or one American built tank or aircraft. The marked success of the operation has historically been explained by the fact that the Germans were in the process of evacuating the salient, but to Pershing it merely reinforced his belief that America had “developed a superior soldier to that existing abroad.”⁵⁹

Through a herculean effort, the Americans reoriented the First Army toward Montfaucon for Foch’s Meuse-Argonne offensive. The doughboys went over the top on 26 September and within three days their drive bogged down against stiff German resistance. The sentiments of General Jean-Henri Mordacq after visiting Pershing during these hard days sum up the view of most of allies. “All that great body of men which the American Army represented was literally struck with paralysis,” he noted, “because ‘the brain’ didn’t exist, because the generals and their staffs lacked experience.”⁶⁰ By 4 October, without proper support services, the First Army was at risk of becoming completely immobile. Pershing’s close friend General Petain even admitted to Foch that unless American performance improved, its efforts should be limited to corps and divisions.⁶¹ The British agreed. As October drew to a close and the allies began to discuss peace terms, Haig warned that the American Army “was not yet organized, not yet formed, and had suffered a great deal on account of its ignorance of modern warfare...” and “cannot be counted upon for much.”⁶² In less than three weeks, the war was over.

PARTNERING AND TRUST

Partnership has become something of an en vogue term in the realm of military thought, used ubiquitously but with few clear definitions. The 2006 National Security Strategy, for example, uses some variation of *partner* forty-eight times in a mere fifty-four pages.⁶³ The

twenty-nine page 2008 National Defense Strategy uses the word fifty-three times, while AFDD 2-3 *Irregular Warfare* makes use of the term at least eighty-one times.⁶⁴ Yet none of these documents explains the nature or key ingredients to successful military partnering. In the 2009 edition of *Small Wars Journal*, Lt Col Edward C. Ledford of the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command Headquarters, attempted to address this shortcoming. Ledford described successful partnering as sharing; sharing intellectual and material resources as well as sharing the inherent risk that comes with relying on a partner and the shared commitment to a common goal that must necessarily bring partners together in the first place. Ledford concludes that if partners are to share resources and risk they must develop an appropriate level of trust, the supreme task of having faith or confidence in the loyalty or strength of something, to know for sure that it can be relied upon when the time comes. From the American plains to the fields of war-torn Europe, cultural intelligence directly influenced Pershing's efforts to build trust with his military partners.

Author Brooks Peterson defines cultural intelligence as "the ability to engage in a set of behaviors that uses skills and qualities that are tuned appropriately to the culture-based values and attitudes of the people with whom one interacts."⁶⁵ This ability to conduct one's self in cross-cultural settings does not imply cultural sympathy or exclude racism. In fact, the concept of Social Darwinism dominated Pershing's view of race and culture. Social Darwinism, in basic terms, was the notion that races and societies were subject to the same type of competition as the struggle between species described in Charles Darwin's *Theory of Evolution*. Races and cultures were at different stages of evolution, the idea went, and while all people were capable of advancement through natural evolution, the most technologically advanced societies clearly had a responsibility and right to "civilize" the rest. Even with this view of cultural evolution and

racial superiority, Pershing displayed more often than not a remarkable degree of cultural intelligence.

SUCCESS AND LIMITATIONS

As a cavalry trooper, Pershing used his awareness of native culture to build trust with his Sioux partners while at the same time seeking to create behavioral change among his scouts. The captain took time to learn a bit of Apache and Sioux and spent a great deal of effort teaching English to his scouts.⁶⁶ He also used native ideas about prestige to affect behavioral change. By selecting Sioux with high tribal station for his non-coms, for example, Pershing not only reinforced unit discipline, he was also able to make inroads with notable “non-progressives” like Chief Red Cloud of the Oglalas. “I found much that was fine in Indian character,” Pershing later recalled. “Once a red man gave his confidence he was entirely trustworthy.”⁶⁷ While Pershing’s comments are clearly paternalistic, his efforts in building trust by using native culture resulted in successful, albeit brief, partnering with the Sioux scouts.

During the siege of Santiago, Pershing’s interactions with General Garcia’s *insurrectos* were far too brief to reveal accurately any use of his cultural intelligence, but it does reveal how negative impressions can enhance cultural bias. Pershing’s poor view of America’s partners arguably instilled in him a lack of trust for the Cubans and an inaccurate impression of rebel contributions to the wider revolution. Pershing’s future superior, General Frederick Funston, recalled his own fierce campaigning alongside the Cuban insurgents years later and aptly captured this notion when he wrote that “Owing to the not very efficient assistance rendered our army by the insurgents during the Santiago campaign, there has grown up among our people an idea that they never did any fighting to amount to anything.”⁶⁸ Ultimately, Pershing’s sense of a

failed partnership in Cuba was due in part to his brief interactions and may well have enhanced his own growing sense of America's cultural superiority.

Pershing's ability to exercise cultural intelligence to build trust paid enormous dividends during his years in the Philippines. First, Pershing personally committed to understanding Moro culture. He spent two years as Adjutant General of the Department of Mindanao-Jolo studying the cultures, languages and issues of his future partner. One superior explained that he had "certain qualities not easy to find in one man," namely, "infinite patience in dealing with these fanatical, semi-savages, wise discretion...and knowledge of the Moro character."⁶⁹ Pershing's awareness of tribal culture was by no means acceptance of it, however. Throughout his service in the Philippines, which he often referred to as his "first love," the honorary *datto* saw the Moro as "wild and untamed" populations who "are yet under the spell of ignorance and superstition" and "must still be classed as barbarians or savages."⁷⁰

And yet Pershing was able to use his cultural understanding to influence behavior and build trust. He avoided taboo issues like slavery and polygamy, and constantly reassured his partners that "the Moro should live according to the teachings of the Koran."⁷¹ The energetic American also understood and took full advantage of the *datto* leadership system by recognizing that real power in the *datto* system came from being wise, reasonable and nobody's fool.⁷² He influenced local *dattos* by first extending his own trust, offering symbolic gifts of allegiance like large American flags, and then bluntly holding them accountable for local security. Finally, Pershing's cultural intelligence informed the policy recommendations he framed for his superiors. In a carefully worded letter intended for Secretary of War, Elihu Root, Pershing explained the Moro view of government and his personal recommendation for success in the

region. His suggestions, Pershing explained, were founded on his “knowledge of Moro character, customs and necessities.”⁷³

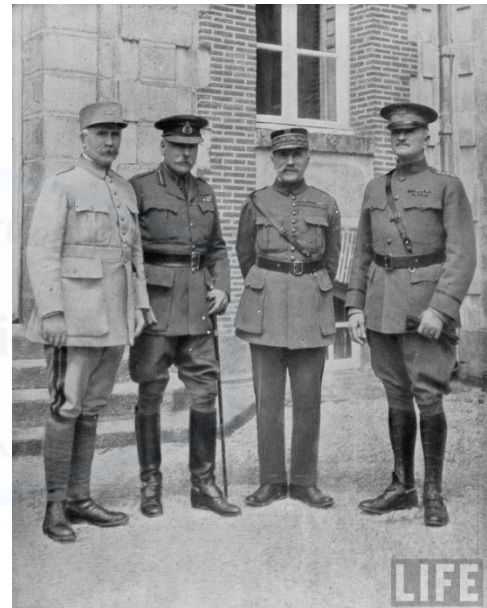
No amount of operational cultural intelligence could overcome the hostility of the Mexican people and the suspicions of their fledgling revolutionary government during Pershing’s pursuit of Pancho Villa. “From the very first, from the time we crossed the line,” Pershing recalled, “we were met by nothing but misinformation and subtle maneuvers to lead us off on wrong trails.”⁷⁴ Still, the general’s early statements to the press professed hope that the Mexican people would welcome America’s help and his troops were given strict orders to treat the populace with extreme deference. Pershing also met several times with *Carranzista* commanders, offering them warm welcome, full protocol and a keen understanding of the tightrope they all walked between collaboration and war.⁷⁵ Even his exasperated recommendation for the immediate capture of city and State of Chihuahua to “further necessary operations” seems to be the result of simple frustration and not a lack of cultural understanding.⁷⁶ The people of Mexico simply had far too many reasons to mistrust America and her soldiers. “We do not like the Americans here,” the locals told Pershing, “because we believe they are in our country to take it.”⁷⁷ Given the long and deep seated suspicions of the Mexican people and the Carranzista government it is little wonder that Pershing’s search for partners in a hostile land, no matter how delicately handled, came up short.

Pershing’s command of the American army in France was the culmination of his military career and it proved to be a frustrating, yet successful, partnering experience. Coalition warfare immediately put the AEF commander’s cultural intelligence to the test. He addressed the language barrier as best he could, holding crash courses in French for his staff while limiting his own attempts at the language to occasional familiar phrases.⁷⁸ Despite the language barrier, the

stern American also managed to build a sincere friendship with French commander, Field Marshall Petain. Pershing's keen sense of timing, history and protocol again proved critical, from his acceptance of Napoleon's sword at the emperor's tomb to his timeless pledge amidst the crisis of March 1918 that "At this moment there are no other questions but of fighting...all that we have are yours; use them as you wish."⁷⁹

Yet despite these efforts, Pershing could never reconcile his own feelings of cultural superiority with the palpable condescension of his partners and an ever-pervasive air of mistrust.

To begin with, the US officially proclaimed itself an "associate" rather than a full ally of France and Britain, a move which made both Pershing and his doughboys easier targets for the war weary Allies. It also made the Americans something of a pawn in age old Franco-British politics. As a result, for the duration of the war, Pershing mistrusted his partners. This mistrust was coupled with Pershing's own sense that America represented the forefront of civilization in both form and



function, manifested in the fact that, as he put it, "America had developed a superior soldier to that existing abroad."⁸⁰ And so, the general refused to allow US troops to accept French decorations or train in anything other than strict adherence to US regulations. When French airs of martial superiority rained on Pershing's sense of American exceptionalism, it was almost more than he could bear. "Do [the French] patronize you? Do they assume superior airs with you?" he inquired of his old friend Robert Bullard. "By God! They have been trying it with me, and I don't intend to stand for it."⁸¹ Ironically, Pershing's most difficult experience in partnering

may have been his most successful. For not only was he able to achieve his objective of establishing the American First Army, his troops were transported, equipped and trained in large part by the partners he so mistrusted.

CONCLUSION

Pershing's ability to use cultural intelligence to build trust and partner with a wide variety of characters developed throughout his career. The American West confronted him with foreign languages and native cultural nuance while Cuba reaffirmed the necessity for discipline and firmness of purpose. In the Philippines, Pershing's innate drive and ability to use culture to create trust in civil-military partnerships matured and his superiors recognized and fostered his talents. In Mexico, despite the inherent limitations of culture at the operational level, Pershing was able to use his cultural awareness to act delicately in a highly sensitive environment. The same holds for his final partnership in France, where Washington gave America's commanding general the latitude to negotiate directly with his potential partners, despite the inherent risks.

If partnering is as vital to America's national security as current strategic guidance indicates, the United States military would do well to learn from General Pershing's lifetime of experience. Its leaders must be exposed to foreign languages and cultures. Regional experts must be cultivated, rewarded and given the requisite amount of empowerment to directly influence the building of trust. Culture awareness cannot always overcome deep-seeded suspicions. Nor can it make up for poor strategy. But clearly, if Pershing's experience has anything to teach, it is that cultural awareness can help a commander build trust with military partners. Frank Lankton, Pershing's orderly of twenty years, perhaps described this idea best in his description of General Pershing. "He has a way of making anyone certain of his goodwill,"

Lankton wrote. "It is not so much what he says, because he does not talk very much, but his ability to say the right thing at the right time in the right way."⁸²

¹ Smythe, Donald. *Guerilla Warrior*, pp 92

² Vandever, 99.

³ Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior*, pp 22

⁴ Vandiver, 104

⁵ Ibid, 100

⁶ Ibid, 100

⁷ McAdam

⁸ Vandiver, 101

⁹ Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior*, pp 23

¹⁰ Vandiver, 185

¹¹ Ibid, 193

¹² Lacy, 26

¹³ Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior*, pp 49

¹⁴ Vandiver, 200

¹⁵ Lacy, 26

¹⁶ Vandiver, 240

¹⁷ Ibid, 255

¹⁸ Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior*, pp 89

¹⁹ Ibid, 74

²⁰ Ibid, 108

²¹ Vandiver, 274

²² Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior*, pp 84

²³ Vandiver, 278

²⁴ Ibid, 280

²⁵ Ibid, 278

²⁶ Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior*, pp 109

²⁷ Vandiver, 468

²⁸ Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior*, pp 145

²⁹ Vandiver, 472

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid, 508

³² Ibid, 530

³³ Ibid, 534

³⁴ Ibid, 563

³⁵ Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior*, pp 199

³⁶ Vandiver, 567

³⁷ Lacy, 191

³⁸ Wellsome, 163

³⁹ Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior*, pp 224

⁴⁰ Wellsome, 169

⁴¹ Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior*, pp 227

⁴² Ibid, 269

⁴³ Wellsome, 219

⁴⁴ Ibid, 222

⁴⁵ Ibid, 223

⁴⁶ Ibid, 234

⁴⁷ Ibid, 307

⁴⁸ Smythe, *Pershing: General of the Armies*, pp, 21

⁴⁹ Bruce, 192

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- ⁵⁰ Smythe, *Pershing: General of the Armies*, pp 8
⁵¹ Ibid, 30
⁵² Ibid, 170
⁵³ Ibid, 71
⁵⁴ Ibid, 101
⁵⁵ Bruce, 233
⁵⁶ Bruce, 195
⁵⁷ Bruce, 249
⁵⁸ Smythe, *Pershing: General of the Armies*, pp 176
⁵⁹ Ibid, 186
⁶⁰ Ibid, 200
⁶¹ Ibid, 208
⁶² Ibid, 220
⁶³ Ledford, 2
⁶⁴ AFDD 2-3, 1 August 2007
⁶⁵ Peterson, 89
⁶⁶ Goldhurst, *Pipe Clay and Drill*, pp 30
⁶⁷ Vandiver, 104
⁶⁸ Funston, 142
⁶⁹ Fulton, 155
⁷⁰ Smythe, 82 and 155
⁷¹ Smythe, 147
⁷² Fulton, 146
⁷³ Fulton, 172
⁷⁴ Vandiver, 269
⁷⁵ Ibid, 628
⁷⁶ Ibid, 635
⁷⁷ Ibid, 269
⁷⁸ Pershing, 59
⁷⁹ Vand, 876
⁸⁰ Ibid, 889
⁸¹ Lacy, 136
⁸¹ Vand, 880



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